THE

WEEKLY ENTERTAINER.

For MONDAY, April 9, 1804.

Sketch of the Life and Writings of John Wolcott, M. D. commonly known by the Name of Peter Pindar, Eſq.

DR. WOLCOTT was born at Dodbrook, near Kingſbridge, in that part of Devonſhire which has been ſo juſtly called the garden of England. His education was firſt conducted by a quaker, in the vicinity of the place where he was born. He was then ſent to France, and there his ſtudies were completed.

The uncle of our bard, living at Fowey, in Cornwall, as ſurgeon and apothecary, trained up his nephew to ſucceed him in buſineſs. His medical knowledge of courſe was at this time acquired. He conducted himſelf in a manner which did him credit, and cultivated a propenſity for drawing, to which he had been addicted.

Sir William Trelawney, a relation and friend of the family, being appointed governor of Jamaica, in the year 1769, Dr. Wolcott felt an inclination to accompany him. His uncle was not pleaſed with the meaſure, but his remonſtrances were not attended with ſucceſs. He at laſt complied; and the nephew having received a medical degree, ſet ſail for that diſtant part of the world. It was, however, a diſappointment to the uncle, and therefore his conſent was matter of gratification.

In the proſecution of the voyage, the ſhip in which he had embarked touched at Madeira, a cluſter of iſlands, which, in ſuch voyages, are often frequented. The ſcenery of this ſequeſtered ſpot has been often celebrated. Here, therefore, he penned ſome exquiſite ſonnets, which are admired for their beauty and ſimplicity.

On his arrival at Jamaica he practiſed as phyſician, and was, in length of time, appointed phyſician-general of the iſland. How long he continued in this ſituation we cannot preciſely

ſay, but from his experience and induſtry, we are aſſured that he acquitted himſelf with ability.

The incumbent of a living in Jamaica dying, the phyſician officiated for ſome time in that capacity. What induced him to quit his medical profeſſion we preſume not to determine; certain it is, that a wiſhful eye (as one of his biographers expreſſes it) was caſt towards the vacant rectory.

He, however, returned to England, and finally ſettled at Truro, in Cornwall, where he again reſumed the medical character, and practiſed with ſucceſs. During the preſent period of his practice in this remote part of England, he diſcovered that ſatirical vein by which he has been ſince diſtinguiſhed. It is confidently ſaid, that his natural propenſity was the means of occaſioning ſome trouble to him. He ridiculed pompoſity, and laſhed it with a becoming ſeverity.

At this time it was that Dr. Wolcott had it in his power, and embraced the opportunity of bringing forward Mr. John Opie, who, as a painter, has attained to eminence in his profeſſion. He was only a ſign-painter; being actually a pariſh apprentice to one Wheeler, a houſe-carpenter! From this obſcure deſtination he was reſcued by the ſubject of our memoir, and has become an honour to his country.

This celebrated painter received his firſt inſtructions from Dr. Wolcott; he furniſhed him with materials, and gave him leſſons. Having made a rapid progreſs, Opie went to Exeter, where, by ſketching the likeneſſes of ſome of its citizens, he obtained both reputation and money. From this place he removed to London, where he has reached to a diſtinguiſhed reputation.

We are not ſure that Dr. Wolcott at this period wrote much; his tranſlation of a Latin epigram, however, was admirable; he produced it in a few minutes; it is as follows:—

> "Come, gentle ſleep, attend thy vot'ry's prayer,
> And tho' death's image to my couch repair;
> How ſweet tho' lifeleſs, yet with life to lie,
> And without dying, O, how ſweet to die!"

Theſe lines are happy; they expreſs what we all feel; they hold up the ſenſations which we cannot fail of experiencing every time we reſign ourſelves to the ſoothing influence of oblivion.

Our author's firſt literary production, at leaſt that which attracted public notice, was his Epiſtle to the Reviewers, in the year 1782; this piece was fraught with ſo much humour, that the public were inſtantly ſtruck with it; its circulation was great, and ſome of the ſentiments are truly laughable: we ſhall

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add a few ſtanzas, for we deem it, on the whole, the happieſt ſatire that ever fell from his pen.

" Fathers of wiſdom, a poor wight befriend;
Oh! hear my ſimple prayer in ſimple lays,
In *forma pauperis* behold I bend,
And of your worſhips aſk a little praiſe.

I am no cormorant for fame, d'ye ſee,
I aſk not all the laurel, but a ſprig;
Then hear me, guardians of the ſacred tree,
And ſtick a leaf or two about my wig!"

At the cloſe of this ſame performance, Peter is not quite ſo modeſt, but rather rude in his ſuggeſtions.

" Whether in gorgeous raiment ye appear,
Or tatters ready from your backs to fall;
Whether with pompous wigs to guard each ear,
Or whether you've no wigs nor ears at all.

Whether ye look like gentlemen or thieves—
I hate uſurpers of the critic throne,
Therefore, *his* compliments the poet gives,
And humbly hopes you'll let his lines alone:

Stay till he aſks your thoughts, ye forward ſages,
Officiouſneſs the modeſt bard abjures;
'Tis ſurely pert to meddle with *his* pages,
Who never deign'd to look in one of *your's!*"

In 1785 his Lyric Ode to the Royal Academicians, appeared, which, though poſſeſſed of conſiderable merit, was marked by too much ſeverity. Mr. Weſt, the hiſtoric painter, is treated moſt cavalierly; for this we ſee no good reaſon; the artiſt has produced ſeveral pieces which will go down with admiration to poſterity.

But it was about this time he wrote and publiſhed his chief ſatirical production, called the Louſiad, a mock heroic poem. One of his biographers ſtates the origin of this lively piece in the following words:—" His majeſty, one afternoon at dinner, actually obſerved the inſect, from which the poem is named, upon his plate, among ſome green peas. This offenſive object occaſioned a decree to iſſue forth, that all the cooks, ſcullions, &c. in the royal kitchen, ſhould have their heads ſhaved. Great murmurings were excited by this mandate, but the law, like that of the Medes and Perſians, was irrevocable. On this incident Peter formed his exquiſite production, and it was the *truth* of it alone that exempted him from proſecution." There are ſe-

veral parts, or cantos, in the Loufiad, and they were publiſhed at different times, ſo that it was by no means at once completed.

His next publication was an Epiſtle to James Boſwell, Eſq. the biographer of Johnſon, occaſioned by his attending the great Coloſſus of modern literature to the Hebrides, or Weſtern Iſles of Scotland; it was followed ſoon by his very humourous piece, entitled, Bozzi and Piozzi, in which he expoſes *tittle-tattle* biographers with an uncommon degree of felicity.

Beſides theſe there were a great many other publications fell from his fruitful pen, particularly his Majeſty's Viſit to Whitbread's Brewhouſe, replete with wit and humour; and his Emperor of Morocco, addreſſed to Sir Joſeph Banks, a truly laughable ſtory; the zeal of the naturaliſt in purſuing a butterfly over the glaſſes of cucumber-beds, &c. is ridiculed after a manner which poſſeſſes a ſtriking originality.

Indeed, the number and acceptance of his publications have been ſuch, that they were ſpread into almoſt every part of the globe. Never did any ſatiriſt enjoy more ſucceſs. Thoſe who reprobated his political ſentiments, and were indignant at his want of reſpect for authority, could not read his effuſions with an unruffled gravity.

At the ſame time we muſt proteſt againſt the abuſe of ſuch talents; his writings, we are ſorry to ſay, are by no means free, either from profanity, or obſcenity. They muſt, therefore, be read, particularly by young perſons, with great caution. The muſe, being of celeſtial origin, ought never to violate the ſacred rules of religion and morality.

Dr. Wolcot, it is ſaid, is at preſent in eaſy circumſtances, owing to the ſucceſs of his works, and he even ſtill practices with ſucceſs in aſthmatic complaints. He alſo has, as we have already related, a taſte for painting, in which he indulges himſelf. In converſation, we are aſſured, he is not ſtriking, though his productions are characteriſed with ſuch an extraordinary degree of archneſs and vivacity.

J. E.

Iſlington.

MEMOIR *of the late* SIR WILLIAM HAMILTON, K. B.

(Concluded from Page 266.)

OF his domeſtic life, about this period, we fortunately have an account from the celebrated ſecretary of the French academy, Duclos, from which we ſhall here give an extract, the more properly, as with the alteration of time and place, it is his characteriſtic picture in every part of his life. "Mr. Hamilton," ſays he, "was in the habit of taking his dinner at home with

with a ſelect number of friends, among whom I had the honour of being admitted. He had alſo a weekly party of the moſt diſtinguiſhed perſons of Naples. In theſe parties, a concert was ſometimes given, in which Miſs Hamilton played on the harpſichord ſo eminently, that her talents were acknowledged in a town decidedly ſuperior in muſical ſcience to the reſt of Italy. Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton are the happieſt couple I ever ſaw. Both ſtill in the vigour of youth, with good hearts and cultivated minds, and tenderly attached to each other, they preſented to me the image of a patriarchal life. The lady, miſtreſs of a conſiderable fortune, enjoys the pleaſure of making that of her huſband, who had nothing of his own but an illuſtrious name. The gentleman, duly ſenſible of what he owes to a beloved wife, is highly pleaſed to acknowledge it, and the ſentiment of his gratitude increaſes the happineſs of his ſituation."

The twelve years which elapſed from 1772 to 1784, formed a remarkable epoch in Mr. Hamilton's life, with reſpect to his advancement and his domeſtic affairs. On the 3d of January, 1772, he was created knight of the Bath. About the year 1775, he loſt his only daughter. In Auguſt, 1782, he likewiſe loſt his lady. And in the year 1784, after twenty years abſence, he viſited his native country; on which occurrence, we preſume, he was made a Fellow of the Royal and Antiquarian Societies.

This time, however, was equally well employed in the ſervice of the ſciences; for in 1779 he repeated his viſits to Mount Veſuvius, and publiſhed the Supplement already mentioned; in February, 1783, he undertook the journey to Calabria, to obſerve the phænomena produced by the dreadful earthquake which juſt before had deſolated that beautiful province, and of which he ſubſequently gave an account, in a letter to Sir Joſeph Banks, inſerted in the Tranſactions of the Royal Society; and ſo early as 1777, he wrote an excellent memoir on the diſcoveries until then made at Pompeii; which memoir, accompanied with thirteen beautiful plates, was inſerted in the fourth volume of the Archæologia, and by which we are informed, "that the city was ſuppoſed to have been a mile in length, and about three miles and a half round; that only one hundred yards of a principal ſtreet, ſuppoſed to run through the whole city, had then been cleared; that the width of the horſe-way was ſaid to be in general ten feet eight inches Engliſh, and the elevated foot way, on each ſide, about three feet wide; that the plan of moſt of the houſes was a ſquare court, with a fountain in the middle, and ſmall rooms round, communicating with that court; and that fragments of large panes of glaſs were found there, ſhewing that the ancients of this period knew well the uſe of glaſs for windows."

His moſt truly meritorious labours, however, at the cloſe of the above-mentioned period, were thoſe which had in view the unrivalled

unrivalled muſeum of Portici; an object which, owing to the narrow-mindedneſs of the miniſtry, had not yet been acceſſible to his reſearches. The hiſtory of the diſcovery of Herculaneum, and of the royal muſeum to which it gave riſe, is too well known to require any detailed notice in this place: It is equally alien to our purpoſe to relate the ſeveral tardy and unſucceſsful meaſures which the government took to illuſtrate that unrivalled eſtabliſhment; and we ſhall only notice the ancient manuſcripts in the muſeum, which are immediately connected with our ſubject. It is known that about eight hundred objects of this kind had been found in the ſeveral excavations of Herculaneum; and that on application being made to Mr. Aſſemanni, of the Vatican, on the ſubject, this learned man had recommended an able, induſtrious, and indefatigable Piariſt monk, namely Father Anthony Piaggi, who poſſeſſed the art of completely unfolding the decayed manuſcripts. Some ſucceſsful trials were made: a work on the philoſophy of Epicurus, another on morals, a third on rhetoric, and a fourth on muſic were brought to light; and of the laſt, the author of which was a Greek named Philodemus, thirty-eight full columns were happily copied. Father Anthony's ſervices were ſtill more beneficial; he inſtructed in his art a pupil named Merli, afterwards as able as himſelf. Neither of them, however, perſevered in their taſks; they complained of the ſupineneſs of the miniſtry, and of their own ſcanty allowance.

Among the papers left by Sir William at his death, are found more than fifty memoirs directed by Father Anthony to the marquis of Sambuca, ſoliciting his patronage for the great work of the manuſcripts, to which ſolicitations that miniſter ſeemed to be deaf. Numberleſs other memoirs of the kind were alſo preſented to ſeveral perſons in the royal ſervice, and they met with no better ſucceſs. The conſequence was, that Father Anthony at laſt committed a curious but moſt exceptional pulcinellata: he put himſelf under the protection of Sir William, and tendered his ſervices for any information which the latter might wiſh, concerning the muſeum. The propriety of accepting this offer may be queſtioned. It was conſidered, however, by one who was not particularly acquainted with the adminiſtration of the eſtabliſhment, as too important not to meet with an immediate compliance: A treaty was concluded, that Sir William ſhould grant to Father Anthony a penſion of 600 ducats a year, (100l.) and the latter ſhould regularly ſend to him every week a ſheet of original information; and in order to elude any miniſterial inquiſition, it was alſo agreed that the correſpondence ſhould be carried on in cyphers. This correſpondence laſted till the death of Father Anthony, in 1798; and, if we except as we have already remarked, a want of delicacy, and perhaps alſo a breach of truſt in the monk, we may preſume, that in the

main object, it proved satisfactory to both parties: Sir William was indeed so satisfied, that, some years after the commencement of the treaty, he procured for Father Anthony an additional pension of the same sum of 600 ducats a year, (100l.) from his royal highness the prince of Wales; and Father Anthony, on his side, seemed also so sensible of the favours he had received, that on his death, he bequeathed all his manuscripts and papers of every kind to his patron.

In the year 1791, Sir William was appointed a privy counsellor; and in the same year he married Miss Harte, the present Lady Hamilton. About the same time also, in order to give a further illustration to his favourite doctrine, respecting the constant state of eruption on Mount Vesuvius, he charged a Dominican friar (whose name the writer of this article does not recollect) at Resina, to compile for his use, a daily calendar of the several phænomena of that mountain; a compilation which, most probably, will also be found among his papers.

We do not think it necessary to give any detailed notice of the extreme period of Sir William's life; as that part is either connected with the general history of the times, or too well known to our readers to require a full narrative. It is in every one's recollection, that, in December, 1798, when the French attacked the kingdom of Naples, he accompanied his Sicilian majesty to Palermo, from whence, towards the close of 1800, he was recalled to England; and of his death, which took place on the 6th of April, 1803, in the 72d year of his age, many circumstantial and interesting accounts were given in the periodical works of the day.

During the short interval between his arrival in England and his death, this respectable philosopher and naturalist was occupied in ordering and classifying his numerous manuscripts, which had been conveyed from Naples to Palermo, at the time of his removal; and from the latter place to London, on his return to England. These manuscripts consisted of eight large boxes; four of which contained his correspondence with Father Anthony, and the other four, the valuable papers which the latter had bequeathed to him. It was his intention, after a due arrangement, to favour the public with two works collected from their contents, one of which was to exhibit a series of original observations on the best monuments of art in the museum of Portici; and the other, a series of historical anecdotes concerning its literary and economical administration, from its first establishment. We are happy to say, that in this expectation the learned public will be little or nothing disappointed by Sir William's death; as before that event, he had deposited all the papers in the hands of his learned and respectable friend, Mr. Townley, of the Antiquarian Society, by whom, we understand, they will be shortly published.

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At the concluſion of this biographical ſketch, ſome of our readers will perhaps inquire, why the memoir of a man who has devoted the greateſt part of a long life to the ſervice of his native country, in a public capacity, contains ſo many details of his literary and philoſophical purſuits, and little or no account of his diplomatic exertions, which naturally conſtituted the immediate duties of his ſtation? We might, it is true, have ſtated, 1ſt. The explanations which, in 1772, he had with the firſt miniſter, Marquis Tanucci, on account of the noted ſcribbler Michael Torcia, who, in his proverbially ridiculous performance, "The Political Sketch of Europe," had uſed ſome improper expreſſions.—2d. The negociations which he ſucceſsfully concluded for the neutrality of his Sicilian majeſty in the American war.—3d. His excellent conduct during the family miſunderſtanding between Spain and Naples, from 1784 to 1786.—4th. His equally proper behaviour towards an eccentric character among our nobility, who, during his reſidence in Naples, from 1784 to 1788, was the conſtant viſitor of the intriguing and ſcandalous ſociety of the Auſtrian counſellor Calzabigi; and 5th. That by his powerful aſcendancy over the Neapolitan miniſtry, and the exceſs of his generoſity and good nature, he forced ſome perſons of infamous character into the offices of ſtate and the provincial magiſtracy. But we wiſhed to avoid giving offence to others while paying a tribute to his memory, eſpecially as we were aware that the fame of Sir William Hamilton will ultimately reſt on his talents, learning, and patriotic ſpirit; for although he may have poſſeſſed the higheſt activity and ſagacity in his capacity of ambaſſador, as it is fair to believe from the happy management of thoſe affairs which fell within the limits of his ſtation, from his attention and obliging behaviour towards Britiſh travellers of every claſs, and from the highly honourable figure which he made among other ambaſſadors at the ſame court, it was utterly impoſſible for him to evince any great degree of diſcernment or penetration in court intrigues, or any ſkill and dexterity in negociations whilſt he had to deal with a languid and inactive government, conſidered in a little better light than an immediate fief of Spain, and an intermediate fief of France. Thoſe among our readers who may not have duly followed the courſe of French politics, during the two laſt reigns of that monarchy, and to whom theſe expreſſions may conſequently appear harſh, are deſired to look into three publications which have appeared within the laſt two years at Paris, the Travels in Italy, a poſthumous work by the celebrated Deſbroſſes, the Travels in Spain, by the Ambaſſador Bourgoing, and the politics of Europe under Lewis XV. and XVI. by Segur, the elder, and they will find in them a common expreſſion of the arrogant cabinet of Verſailles—"the two petty

ſtates which are poſſeſſed by the princes of our royal family in Italy!"

It is unfortunately but too true, that neither his preſent Sicilian majeſty, nor his auguſt father, ever aſſerted the conſideration to which they were naturally intitled in European affairs, and that they have been ſubjected to a mortifying diſregard by the eternal inſufficiency of their miniſters. But it is, nevertheleſs, an inſult to juſtice, to truth, and common ſenſe, to compare two rich and extenſive kingdoms with that almoſt imperceptible ſpot the dukedom of Parma, and to beſtow the name of "petty ſtate" upon a powerful monarchy, poſſeſſing nearly ſeven millions of inhabitants;—that very monarchy, by which the high-ſpirited prince, Charles of Anjou, attempted nothing leſs than the conqueſt of the eaſtern empire, and which that auguſt ſovereign of the houſe of Suabia, who was an honour to his age and to the Imperial diadem, emphatically called, *hereditatem noſtram pretioſam!*

Addreſs of the Right Rev. Dr. Porteus, Lord Biſhop of London, to the Clergy of his Dioceſe, on the new Dangers offered to Religion and Morality from the State of thoſe great Intereſts on the Continent in 1803, *when the Addreſs was delivered.*

"Reverend Brethren,

"SINCE we laſt met in this place, we have enjoyed eighteen months of tranquillity and peace;* and although we ought to be thankful to providence even for that brief reſpite from the miſeries and deſolations of war, yet the free and unreſtrained intercourſe which it has of courſe produced between this iſland and foreign countries has, I fear, in one reſpect, been attended with conſequences which we have much reaſon to lament.

"What the ſtate of ſociety, of religion, and of morals, is, in ſome parts of Europe, is no ſecret to any one; and it can hardly be ſuppoſed that ſuch multitudes of our countrymen, eſpecially of our *young* countrymen, as have for nearly the laſt two years reſorted to the continent, can have entirely eſcaped the contagion of principles and manners, highly repugnant to the decency and ſobriety of our national character, to thoſe virtuous ſentiments which have been early impreſſed upon our minds, and to thoſe important duties, private, domeſtic, and public, which we have hitherto been accuſtomed to regard with re-

* This charge was delivered before the renewal of hoſtilities between this country and France.

verence. Add to this, that many foreign publications of the moſt pernicious tendency have, during this interval of repoſe, found their way into this kingdom; and from one of them more particularly (which is a regular code and ſyſtem of infidelity, much admired and applauded abroad), a ſhort abſtract has been made here, in order to bring it within the reach both of the pockets and the underſtandings of the middle and lower claſſes of the community, and to diffuſe the bleſſings of impiety and irreligion as widely as poſſible through every part of this kingdom.†

"Under theſe circumſtances, we, my brethren, who are the appointed guardians of the morals and the religion of this country, are powerfully called upon to guard our people with the utmoſt care, not only againſt thoſe irregularities which may be conſidered as the natural growth of our own climate, but againſt thoſe exotic vices and ſyſtems of impiety, which there is too much reaſon to believe have been of late imported among us.

"For this purpoſe we muſt not content ourſelves with the diſcharge of our ordinary occupations, and our ſtated functions, but muſt enter with zeal and with ardour into all the various *private* duties of the paſtoral care. More particularly, we muſt be careful to explain to our people, clearly and forcibly, the principal evidences on which the truth of our religion reſts, the great fundamental doctrines of the Chriſtian faith, and all the various important precepts which it requires us to obſerve. All theſe we muſt preſs upon them with devout and ſolemn earneſtneſs, and exert all the powers and all the talents we are poſſeſſed of, in endeavouring to fortify their minds by every virtuous and every religious principle, againſt the many new temptations, both to apoſtacy from their faith, and to diſſoluteneſs of manners, which may now poſſibly aſſail them. For all theſe meritorious ſervices the public will principally look up to that moſt valuable and reſpectable body of men, the parochial clergy of the church of England. And there can be no doubt but that their efforts to preſerve the faith and the morals of their pariſhioners, if ſteadily perſevered in, will, with the bleſſing of God, be finally ſucceſsful. For it is inconceivable how much may be done in this way, how much vice and miſery may be prevented, how much virtue and happineſs may be produced, by a truly laborious, conſcientious, exemplary clergyman, reſiding conſtantly on his benefice, whoſe great buſineſs and delight

† The tract here alluded to (which I produced to the clergy at my viſitation, but which I do not think it expedient to name here) has paſſed through ſeveral editions; and it was remarkable that the larger work, from which it is extracted, conſtituted the whole library of one of the rebels lately executed in Ireland.

delight it is to advance the welfare and ſave the ſouls of his pariſhioners; who, like his bleſſed maſter, goes about doing good, watching over his people with paternal tenderneſs and anxiety, converſing with them familiarly and affectionately, inſtructing them carefully and aſſiduouſly in the ground and foundation of their faith in Chriſt, and in the doctrines of that truly apoſtolical church in which they have the happineſs to be born and educated; impreſſing ſtrongly on their minds all the various duties of their high and heavenly calling, rebuking the bold impenitent offender, encouraging the humble and the penitent, ſeizing eagerly every opportunity, that ſickneſs, or misfortune, or affliction affords, of ſoftening and ſubduing their hearts with the power of religion, and inſpiring them with a reſolution to repel with vigour every attempt that ſhall be made to ſeduce them from their belief in the goſpel, and their allegiance to their heavenly ſovereign.

"A conduct ſuch as this will, I am perſuaded, be a ſovereign antidote to the poiſon of that continental depravity which might otherwiſe diffuſe itſelf over this iſland, and contaminate the minds and manners of its inhabitants."

An Account of the Pearl Fiſhery in Ceylon; and of the Cuſtoms of the various Indian Nations who frequent the Fiſhery.

(Concluded from Page 271.)

THE conjurers are known in the Malabar language by the name of pillal karras, or binders of ſharks. During the time of the fiſhery they ſtand on the ſhore from the morning till the boats return in the afternoon, all the while muttering and mumbling prayers, diſtorting their bodies into various ſtrange attitudes, and performing ceremonies to which no one, not even themſelves I believe, can attach any meaning. All this while it is neceſſary for them to abſtain from food or drink, otherwiſe their prayers would be of no avail. Theſe acts of abſtinence, however, they ſometimes diſpenſe with, and regale themſelves with toddy, a ſpecies of liquor diſtilled from the palm-tree, till they are no longer able to ſtand at their devotions.

Some of the conjurers frequently go in the boats with the divers, who are greatly delighted at the idea of having their protectors along with them; but in my opinion, this fancied protection renders the divers more liable to accidents, as it induces them to venture too much, and without proper precautions, in full confidence of the infallible power of their guardians. It muſt not however be imagined, that theſe conjurers are altogether the dupes of their own arts, or that they accompany their vota-

ries to the fiſhery merely from an anxious care of their ſafety; their principal purpoſe in going thither is, if poſſible, to filch a valuable pearl. As this is the caſe, it is evident that the ſuperintendant of the fiſhery muſt look upon their voyages with a jealous eye; ſuch, however, is the devoted attachment of their votaries, that he is obliged to paſs it over in ſilence, or at leaſt to conceal his ſuſpicions of their real intentions. He muſt alſo never hint a doubt of their power over the ſharks, as this might render the divers ſcrupulous of committing themſelves to the deep, or indeed deter them from fiſhing at all. The conjurers reap here a rich harveſt, for beſide being paid by the government, they get money and preſents of all ſorts from the black merchants, and thoſe ſucceſsful in fiſhing up the oyſters.

The addreſs of theſe fellows in redeeming their credit, when any untoward accident happens to falſify their predictions, deſerves to be noticed. Since the iſland came into our poſſeſſion, a diver at the fiſhery one year loſt his leg, upon which the head conjurer was called to account for the diſaſter. His anſwer gives the moſt ſtriking picture of the knowledge and capacity of the people he had to deal with. He gravely told them, "that an old witch who owed him a grudge, had juſt come from Colang on the Malabar coaſt, and effected a counter-conjuration, which for the time rendered his ſpells fruitleſs; that this had come to his knowledge too late to prevent the accident which had happened, but that he would now ſhow his own ſuperiority over his antagoniſt by enchanting the ſharks, and binding up their mouths, ſo that no more accidents ſhould happen during the ſeaſon."

Fortunately for the conjurer the event anſwered his prediction, and no further damage was ſuſtained from the ſharks during the fiſhery of that year. The appearance of a ſingle ſhark is indeed ſufficient to ſpread diſmay among the whole body of divers; for as ſoon as one of them ſees a ſhark he inſtantly gives the alarm to his companions, who as quickly communicate it to the other boats; a panic ſpeedily ſeizes the whole, and they often return to the bay without fiſhing any more for that day. The ſharks which create all this alarm ſometimes turn out to be nothing more than a ſharp ſtone on which the divers happen to alight. As falſe alarms excited in this manner prove very injurious to the progreſs of the fiſhery, every means is employed to aſcertain whether they are well or ill-founded; and if the latter be the caſe, the authors of them are puniſhed.

The divers are paid differently, according to their private agreement with the boat-owners. They are paid either in money, or with a proportion of the oyſters caught, which they take the chance of opening on their own account; the latter is the method moſt commonly adopted. The agreements with the people who hire out the boats are conducted much in the ſame manner.

manner. They contract either to receive a certain ſum for the uſe of their boats, or pay the chief farmer of the banks a certain ſum for permiſſion to fiſh on their own account. Some of thoſe who purſue the latter plan are very ſucceſsful and become rich; while others are great loſers by the ſpeculation. Oyſter lotteries are carried on here to a great extent; they conſiſt of purchaſing a quantity of the oyſters unopened, and running the chance of either finding or not finding pearls in them. The European officers and gentlemen, who attend here upon duty or through curioſity, are particularly fond of theſe lotteries, and very frequently make purchaſes of this ſort.

The boat owners and merchants are very apt to loſe many of the beſt pearls while the boats are on their return to the bay from the banks, as the oyſters when alive, and left for ſome time undiſturbed, frequently open their ſhells of their own accord: a pearl may then be eaſily diſcovered, and the oyſter prevented, by means of a bit of graſs or ſoft wood, from again cloſing its ſhell, till an opportunity offers of picking out the pearl. Thoſe fellows who are employed to ſearch among the fiſh alſo commit many depredations, and even ſwallow the pearls to conceal them; when this is ſuſpected, the plan followed by the merchants is to lock the fellows up, and give them ſtrong emetics and purgatives, which have frequently the effect of diſcovering the ſtolen goods.

As ſoon as the oyſters are taken out of the boats, they are carried by the different people to whom they belong, and placed in holes or pits dug in the ground to the depth of about two feet, or in ſmall ſquare places cleared and fenced round for the purpoſe; each perſon having his own ſeparate diviſions. Mats are ſpread below them to prevent the oyſters from touching the earth; and here they are left to die and rot. As ſoon as they have paſſed through a ſtate of putrefaction, and have become dry, they are eaſily opened without any danger of injuring the pearls, which might be the caſe if they were opened freſh, as at that time to do ſo requires great force. On the ſhell being opened, the oyſter is minutely examined for the pearl: it is uſual even to boil the oyſter, as the pearl, though commonly found in the ſhell, is not unfrequently contained in the body of the fiſh itſelf.

The ſtench occaſioned by the oyſters being left to putrefy is intolerable, and remains for a long while after the fiſhery is over. It corrupts the atmoſphere for ſeveral miles round Condatchy, and renders the neighbourhood of that country extremely unpleaſant till the monſoons and violent ſouth-weſt winds ſet in and purify the air. The naufeous ſmell, however, is not able to overcome the hopes of gain: for months after the fiſhing ſeaſon, numbers of people are to be ſeen earneſtly ſearching and poring over the ſands and places where the oyſters had been laid to putrefy; and ſome are now and then fortunate enough to find a

pearl

pearl that amply compenſates their trouble in ſearching after them.

The pearls found at this fiſhery are of a whiter colour than thoſe got in the gulf of Ormus on the Arabian coaſt, but in other reſpects are not accounted ſo pure, or of ſuch an excellent quality; for though the white pearls are more eſteemed in Europe, the natives prefer thoſe of a yellowiſh or golden caſt. Off Tuticoreen, which lies on the Coromandel coaſt, nearly oppoſite to Condatchy, there is another fiſhery; but the pearls found there are much inferior to thoſe two ſpecies juſt mentioned, being tainted with a blue or grayiſh tinge.

In preparing the pearls, particularly in drilling and ſtringing them, the black people are wonderfully expert. The inſtrument they employ in drilling, is a machine made of wood, in ſhape reſembling an obtuſe inverted cone, about ſix inches in length and four in breadth, ſupported upon three feet, each twelve inches long. In the upper flat ſurface of this machine, holes or pits are formed to receive the larger pearls, the ſmaller ones being beat in with a little wooden hammer. The drilling inſtruments are ſpindles of various ſizes according to that of the pearls; they are turned round in a wooden head by means of a bow handle to which they are attached. The pearls being placed in the holes or pits, and the point of the ſpindle adjuſted to them, the workman preſſes on the wooden head of the machine with his left hand, while his right is employed in turning round the bow handle. During the proceſs of drilling, he occaſionally moiſtens the pearl, by dipping the little finger of his right hand in a cocoa-nut filled with water, which is placed by him for that purpoſe; this he does with a dexterity and quickneſs which ſcarcely impedes the operation, and can only be acquired by much practice.

They have alſo a variety of other inſtruments, both for cutting and drilling the pearls. To clean, round, and poliſh them to that ſtate in which we ſee them, a powder made of the pearls themſelves is employed.

Theſe different operations in preparing the pearls occupy a great number of the black men in various parts of the iſland. In the black town or pettah of Columbo, in particular, many of them may every day be ſeen at this work.

The moſt painful acts of penance which the Indians undergo, are in order to regain their caſt, when they have loſt it either by eating things forbidden by the rules of their ſect, or by having ſuch connection with people of a different deſcription as is ſuppoſed to defile them. In this ſtate they are held in abhorrence by perſons of their own ſect, debarred from all intercourſe with them, and prohibited even to touch them. From ſuch a dreadful ſtate of defilement they can be purified only by paying a large ſum of money, or by undergoing the moſt incredible pe-

nances. Among thoſe which I obſerved, I ſhall mention a few of the moſt remarkable. One of them will vow to hold his arm elevated over his head for a certain number of years, without once letting it down; and this he will actually continue to do, till the arm can never afterward be recovered to its natural poſition. Another will keep his hand ſhut till the nails on his fingers abſolutely grow into the fleſh, and appear quite through at the back of his hand. Many never ſuffer their hair to be combed, or their beards to be ſhaved: in this ſtate the hair of their heads, which is of a brown or burnt colour, gets matted, and appears not unlike the mops we uſe in Europe; or hangs down in long diſhevelled ſtrings, ſimilar to that which grows on a ſpecies of French lap-dogs. Some will vow never to lie down; while, at the ſame time, they wear round their necks a large iron inſtrument not unlike a gird-iron without a handle.

But one of the moſt extraordinary of theſe ceremonies is, ſwinging for their caſt, as it is termed, and is by no means unfrequent. A very high and ſtrong poſt, or cocoa-tree, is planted firmly in the ground; on its top, another beam is placed croſswiſe, to turn round on a pivot; and from the end of the tranſverſe beam, ropes and pullies are ſuſpended to hoiſt up the devotee. He is then brought out, attended by a number of people dancing before him; and is led thrice round the ſwinging-poſt by the Brahmins and his relations, with loud ſhouts, accompanied by muſic. In the mean time a ſheep is ſacrificed, and the blood ſprinkled about on the ſurrounding multitude, who are eager that it ſhall fall upon them. Barren women, in particular, are anxious to catch the drops, in hopes of being by this means rendered fruitful; and with a view to ſecure the efficacy of this charm, they contrive to work themſelves up, during the ceremony, to the higheſt pitch of religious delirium, tearing their hair and ſhrieking in the moſt dreadful manner. After the ſacrifice is performed, the devotee is placed on his belly flat on the ground, and two very large hooks, which have been previouſly fixed to the ropes ſuſpended from the end of the croſs-beam, are inſerted deep into the fleſh of his back juſt under the ſhoulders: other ropes are alſo placed under his breaſt and acroſs his thighs, to help to ſuſtain the weight of his body. He is then, by means of the ropes and pullies, hoiſted up to the croſs-tree, immediately under which he continues ſuſpended; and in this poſition he is drawn round the poſt two or three time. During this painful ceremony he repeats a certain number of prayers, and continues to throw among the crowd flowers which he had taken up with him for the purpoſe: theſe are conſidered as ſacred relics, which will keep away all diſeaſe, and enſure happineſs ever after; and the ſurrounding multitude ſcramble for them as eagerly as an Engliſh mob for money thrown among them.

The

The prieſts who attend at Condatchy on account of theſe and other ceremonies, as well as many other ſects of religious mendicants, are a great nuiſance there; for, beſide being exceedingly lazy and idle, they are likewiſe very impudent and troubleſome. But they are not the only peſts which annoy the multitudes collected at the pearl fiſhery. There are beſide a crowd of jugglers, ſnake-catchers, dancing boys and girls of all deſcriptions, as well as many who follow no other occupation but to procure their livelihood by the arts of filching and thieving, at which they are exceedingly dexterous. This practice, however, is the more pardonable in them, as it appears to be an inherent propenſity in an Indian. In their dealings with an European, whenever an opportunity preſents itſelf, they never fail to employ their ſkill in over-reaching him. It is only, however, by pilfering and ſtealing that he ſuffers from them, for they hardly ever ventured to rob or take his goods from him by open force. So great, indeed, is the awe which the atchievements of the Europeans have inſpired into the natives of India, that a black man is ſcarcely ever known to meet a white man hand to hand, either in private conflict or in battle.

There is no ſcene at which the native Indians can have a finer opportunity of turning their dexterity to account, than the bay of Condatchy, at the ſeaſon of the pearl fiſhery. For this reaſon, rogues flock thither from all parts of India, and no precaution is ſufficient to prevent their depredations. Their practice of picking out the pearls from the oyſters and ſecreting them is, in particular, carried to a great height, and it has been found impoſſible to put a ſtop to it. In this general cenſure of the natives of India, we do not include the native Ceyloneſe; for, although the pearl fiſhery be carried on in their iſland, yet few of them attend it, in compariſon of the numbers who flock from other parts of India. Nor are they at all ſo much addicted to roguery, nor equal in ſlight of hand, to the Indians of the continent, who ſeem to have theſe accompliſhments by inheritance, and are very proud of them.

At Condatchy their depredations are reduced to a ſyſtem, and no precautions can entirely guard againſt them. The boat-owners and merchants dealing in the oyſters, are obliged to hire people to collect the pearls out of them; and to prevent embezzling, confidential perſons are appointed, who conſtantly attend to watch over and obſerve them.

REFLECTION.

IF you would prove yourſelf a Chriſtian, embrace every opportunity of doing good, and carefully avoid doing any one an injury.

AN ANECDOTE.

THAT well-known character, Alderman Guy, who was one of the moſt penurious beings of his time, had brought himſelf to live on four-pence a day. Hearing that Vulture Hopkins, alſo a great miſer, never expended more than three-pence halfpenny a day, he ſet out one evening in ſearch of the latter; and having found out his apartment, the firſt floor next the ſky, in an obſcure part of St. Giles's, he knocked at the door, when a hollow voice, from within, demanded, "Who is there?" and their buſineſs. "I am Alderman Guy," ſaid the viſitor, "come to aſk thee a queſtion, friend Hopkins." "Stay then," replied the other, "while I ſtrike a light, and I'll let you in;" which having done, he opened the door, and placing his great arm-chair on the floor, requeſted Guy to ſit at one end, and he would occupy the other.

"I have been informed," ſaid Guy, "that you live on three-pence halfpenny a day, and I cannot, with all my endeavours, do with leſs than four-pence; therefore, pray tell me how I may ſave my halfpenny, and live with as much economy as you do?" "If that be all, friend Guy," returned Hopkins, "we may talk over this matter in the dark;" and ſo ſaying, he puffed out the light. "What! do not you burn a candle?" "No," ſaid Hopkins, "I have had this three months, and hope to have it three months longer." "I now perceive my error," exclaimed Guy. "I have paid a halfpenny a day for a ruſh-light, and, from this moment, I will burn no more candle."

Here they parted, and Hopkins left Guy to explore his way down in the dark. The alderman was as good as his word, and to the laſt hour of his life was heard to boaſt, he had learned to live on three-pence halfpenny per day from his friend and rival in avarice, Vulture Hopkins.

To ſuch pitiful extremes does avarice expoſe its deluded votaries; that vice renders the mind callous to every tender and ſocial feeling.

A QUESTION, *by R. Maffett, of Saltaſh.*

THREE graziers have purchaſed a triangular meadow between them; one is to have 5 acres, another 4 acres, and the third 3 acres; and in order that each ſhall have a watering-place in his part, it is agreed to make the diviſion from one hedge of the meadow, whoſe length is 18 chains, to the oppoſite angle. I wiſh to know where the points of diviſion are to be placed in this hedge, ſo that fences made from thence to the oppoſite angle ſhall truly limit each man's part?

Anſwer, by Recluſe, of Awliſcombe, to T. Rutger's Charade, inſerted Dec. 26.

LONG-LEAT, in Wiltſhire, will explain,
The handſome manſion which you mean.

Anſwer, by W. Bickham, Jun. of Aſhburton, to Primroſe's Charade, inſerted February 6.

THE EVENING-STAR in beauty's ſeen,
And ſurely is what you did mean.

☞ We have received the like anſwer from A. Kyne, jun. of Dartmouth

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Anſwer, by P. Gove, of Exeter, to W. Strong's Enigma, inſerted February 6.

FULL many a GENIUS doth obſcurely dwell,
Unknown to fame, in poverty's ſad cell.

† We have received the like anſwer from W. Bickham, junior, and William Mann, of Aſhburton; R. Holwell, J. Squance, and E. Moon, of Exeter; and A. Kyne, jun. of Dartmouth.

A CHARADE, *by A. Kyne, Jun. of Dartmouth.*

PROLIFIC firſt! by thy enliv'ning aid
Are all the beauties of the field diſplay'd;
Neglected next! by heroes once eſteem'd,
But now diſcarded, and as uſeleſs deem'd:
My beauteous whole charms the delighted eye,
When its tranſlucent hues adorn the ſky.

A REBUS, *by J. Rouſell, of Lopen.*

A Small coin for my firſt ſelect;
And then an inſect pray detect;
The wildeſt foreign beaſt pray find,
Where beauty in perfection ſhines;
A foreign fruit my next muſt ſhow;
Then Juno's title comes to view:
Ye bards! then join the initials clear,
What moſt men uſe will then appear.

A REBUS, *by Primroſe, of Taunton.*

A Kingdom in Africa found;
The next will its ſovereign declare;
Whoſe days will with honour be crown'd,
If the third be performed with care.
In Aſia's far pleaſanter clime,
We ſee there a mountain expos'd;
Then the former initials combine,
With the name of the latter tranſpos'd.
An author beneath the diſguiſe
Is faintly concealed from the view;
Then ſay how his writings you prize,
And what to his merit is due.

POETRY.

AGRICULTURE: A POEM.

NOW dreary March hath left the scene,
And yields to April's milder sway,
Bright Phœbus spangles o'er the green,
And gilds the lawn with glitt'ring ray.

His grateful light illumes the earth,
And ushers in the roseate morn,
That gives to healthful labour birth,
Which doth Britannia's isle adorn.

For amply are her sons repaid
For their great industry and toil,
Since plenty show'rs upon their head
Her blessings in the gen'rous soil.

Her hardy sons their wealth obtain,
(Then live, when old, in plenteous ease)
By exportation of her grain
Across the rough and raging seas.

Her produce, sent to India's shore,
(Where Sol emits his ardent flames)
Repays them with the radiant ore,
And fills with spices rich the Thames.

She, with an happy medium blest,
A climate mild can ever boast;
Nor feels the fervours of the east,
Nor Lapland's everlasting frost.

Fir'd by these thoughts, the farmer plies
His early work ere morning beams,
Then to his short repast he hies,
When Sol in highest glory gleams.

Meanwhile his gen'rous steeds receive
Their food from their kind master's hand,
In gratitude that they relieve
His soil, and fertilize the land.

When Sol descends with sloping wheel,
His post-meridian work's begun,
His hand again the fallows feel,
'Till western worlds receive the sun.

Now home he bends his weary way,
And as he wanders all along,
He cheers the labours of the day,
By chanting o'er a rural song.

Rejoicing in the fruitful soil,
That rich repays his daily task,
He drowns in ale the thoughts of toil,
And drains the fragrant spicy flask.

Meanwhile his children grasp his knees,
At their dear Dad's arrival proud;
His cheerful spouse, design'd to please,
Prepares their plain, but wholesome food.

While they enjoy their frugal meal,
They sooth with converse every care;
Their theme, perhaps, their future weal—
The rising harvest of the year.

He, happy, then retires to rest;
No inward torments can he know;
No selfish thoughts disturb his breast;
To all a friend—he fears no foe.

Content, that treasure! sought in vain,
By those who spurn at humble lot,
Vouchsafes to smile upon the swain,
And ornament the clay-built cot.

Thus happy may I spend my days!
May competence the scene adorn,
The poor to aid, and all to please,
And sink, lamented, to the dreary urn!

REG. JUVENIS.

For the Weekly Entertainer.

TO MEMORY.

FOND nymph! at eve's empurpled hour,
When silence rules the shadowy dell,
Oft let me cull each simple flower,
That blossoms near thy mystic cell.

Too soon the flow'rs of summer die,
Or languish in a sultry clime;
But thine, O memory! defy
The ruffian storms of grief and time.

When youth's enchanting spring is o'er,
And age a wintry semblance wears,
They bloom as beauteous as before,
And sweeten life's departing cares.

But not to those whom conscience stings
Dost thou appear a welcome guest;
Thy undeceiving presence brings
Conviction to the guilty breast.

Back

Back thro' the mazy paths of ſin;
A look of ſad regret they caſt
And feel an awful pow'r within,
Condemning all their foibles paſt.

Thrice bleſt is he who calmly eyes
At life's decline thy fairy ſcene;
And bids thy faithful viſions riſe
With heart compos'd, and brow ſerene.

As from his ſight thoſe proſpects ſteal,
And fate thy magic power deſtroys,
Fond hope's irraditae beams reveal
The region of eternal joys.

Plymouth-Dock. PALEMON.

SOLITARY REFLECTIONS.

ADDRESSED *to a* YOUNG LADY.

WHY thus is joy fled from my heart,
Since late thy ſoft converſe I knew?
What is it I fain would impart?
Why hangs the time but when with you?

What is it I wiſh to diſcloſe?
Why ſtruggles this ſigh to be free?
Ah! why am I loſt to repoſe?
Why vain do I think but on thee?

The lily neglected that fades,
With-held from the nouriſhing tear,
Revives in the night's humid ſhades:
'Tis thus in thy preſence I cheer.

But, ah! ſad deſpair fills my heart,
I ſcarce from the tear can refrain;
For fancy forebodes as we part,
Alas! we may ne'er meet again!

CAROLUS.

A SONG, *by* T. CAMPBELL, *Eſq.*

SWEET Iſor, were thy ſunny realm,
And flow'ry fountains mine;
Thy waters I would ſhade with elm,
To prop the tender vine!

My golden flaggons I would fill,
With roſy draught from every hill,
And under each green ſpreading bow'r,
My gay companions ſhould prolong
The laugh, the revel, and the ſong,
To many a ſportive hour!

Like rivers crimſon'd by the beam
Of yonder planet bright,
Our nectar cups ſhould ever ſtream
Profuſion of delight.

No care ſhould touch the mellow heart,
And ſad or ſober none depart,
(For wine can triumph over woe);
Then love and Bacchus, (brother powers)
Might build on Iſor's ſunny bowers,
A paradiſe below!

Epitaph in Downton Church-yard, on a young Lady who died in a Conſumption.

HERE, in the cold embrace of death,
What once was elegance and beauty lies;
Mute is the muſic of her tuneful breath,
And quench'd the radiance of her ſparkling eyes.

A prey to ling'ring malady ſhe fell,
Ere yet her form had loſt its vernal bloom:
Her virtues, mis'ry oft reliev'd may tell—
The reſt let ſilent charity entomb;

Nor ſuffer buſy, unrelenting zeal,
E'en here, her gentle frailties to purſue:
Let envy turn from what it cannot feel,
And malice rev'rence what it never knew:

But ſhould the juſtice of the good and wiſe
Condemn her faults with judgment too ſevere;
Let mild-ey'd pity from the heart ariſe,
And blot the rigid ſentence with a tear.

LINES *to the* DORMANT ROSE.

CHILD of the vernal ſky, fair flow'r!
No longer hide thy charming face;
Awake to hope! awake to pow'r!
And emulate the morn-ſtar's grace!

Pale winter's fled on airy feet,
And all his chilling froſts are oe'r;
Haſte, then thy dew-diſtilling ſweet;
Haſte to unfold thy balmy flore.

Warm zephyr's gales, with am'rous haſte,
Wait to attend thee on thy way;
The honied floriſts long to taſte
Thy balmy kiſſes, as they play.